

# A Reorientation for LEED

By Janice Kaspersen



**W**e're just starting 2011, but at least one group is looking ahead to 2012. The US Green Building Council (USGBC) has prepared a preliminary new version of the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System, LEED 2012, and will hold at least two public comment periods—more if needed—this year. The first, which ran from November 2010 through mid-January 2011, is just closing, and another will be open July 1 through August 15, 2011.

LEED has been widely accepted—perhaps more widely than even its creators first envisioned. Many local and state governments have requirements for publicly funded buildings to meet LEED criteria. There are now several rating systems, including LEED for New Construction, LEED for Commercial Interiors, for Retail, for Schools, for Healthcare, for Homes, and for Neighborhood Development. There is also LEED for Existing Buildings, which provides a benchmark against which building owners and operators can measure operations and maintenance efficiency.

The LEED criteria cover many different areas. LEED 2012 increases the number of credit categories from seven

to 10 (categories are broad areas such as Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Water Efficiency, and within each category there are a number of specific credits). The most obvious change for stormwater professionals in LEED 2012 is that the credits for Stormwater Management in previous versions—separate credits for stormwater quality and quantity—have been combined into a single Rainwater Management credit within the Sustainable Sites category. In its summary of the changes, an *Environmental Building News* article notes “Describing the object of this credit as ‘rainwater’—a resource—instead of ‘stormwater’—a management problem—is a subtle but important reorientation.”

Perhaps a less obvious but more fundamental change for stormwater management is the continued expansion of LEED from focusing mainly on a building or a site to its place in the larger community. LEED 2012 contains a credit category called Location and Transportation; the name is taken from a category in the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system, which was launched early in 2010. While some of the items in this category deal with things that at first glance have little relation to stormwater—Bicycle Storage, for example—many of the credits here have far-reaching implications, dealing with such areas as site selection, development density, transportation, and walkable neighborhoods. Recent articles in *Stormwater*, such as Paul Crabtree’s “Principles of Smart Growth” in the March/April 2010 issue, Martin Dreiling’s “Taking a Stance on Sprawl” in the November/December 2010 issue, and John Jacob’s “Watersheds, Walkability, and Stormwater: The Role of Density” on page 32 of this issue, examine in detail how these concepts relate to stormwater management.

You can find more information on LEED 2012 at the USGBC’s Web site, [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org). ♣

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